

SPUMCO

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John Leverence
Awards Director
Academy of Television Arts & Science
5220 Lankershim Blvd.
North Hollywood, Calif. 91601-3109

Dear Mr. Leverence:

I am extremely honored to have been nominated for the Outstanding Animated **Series** or **Special** (1 hour or less) and thank the Academy for its vote of confidence. I have just been informed that we now must add some names to the nomination credits. Since we followed your Emmy regulations as close to the book as we could in order to keep the process as simple as possible, this comes as a complete surprise and shock to us. I now ask for your patience as I explain why we feel it is unfair and that it would be a breach of your own Academy regulations to add these names.

The following is a history of the events concerning our application for consideration of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW in the Emmys:

SPUMCO entered an episode of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW entitled "SON OF STIMPY" as a **Series** in the category of OUTSTANDING ANIMATED PROGRAM (1 hour or less) – Category 68. This episode was produced for Nickelodeon as part of the **Series**. It was always intended to be part of the **Series**.

The entry was sent in on Mar. 31, 1993 before the due date of Apr. 5. Along with our entry was a letter to you (dated Mar. 29) asking that, in case the Academy had to choose between SPUMCO'S entry or NICKELODEON'S, we hoped that the Academy would choose our entry as being the legitimate entry. Frankly, we never expected the people at Nickelodeon to enter a **Series** that they never supported in the first place, a **Series** that they did not like, and most importantly, a **Series** that Nickelodeon DID NOT PRODUCE. Please see the attached copy of the letter.

Libby Simon, my Producer, was called by Gerry Woolery on Apr. 9, 1993. He told her that Vanessa Coffey had just tried to get our entry for **Series** disqualified on the grounds that "SON OF STIMPY" was aired first on MTV , and that it was not part of THE REN & STIMPY SERIES, that it was a **Special**. As I stated earlier, "SON OF STIMPY" was produced as part of the **Series** on Nickelodeon. It was never intended to be a **Special**, not by us, not by Nickelodeon, not by MTV. The only reason that it aired on MTV and only ONCE, is that the Nickelodeon executives didn't like the episode and were afraid to show it, even after the entire content of the episode was approved months earlier at the story and storyboard stages of production. This point is very important because it seems inconceivable to allow Nickelodeon to have extra names attached to an episode ("SON OF STIMPY") which they (a) lied about (b) admittedly never aired and (c) tried to get disqualified from Emmy consideration.

Nickelodeon entered "STIMPY'S FAN CLUB" of THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW, *also* as a **Series** to be considered in Category 68 by the second due date of May 11. This Episode was aired on Apr. 24, which was *past the 1st due date of entry*. We were informed by the Academy that there was now a dispute. Two entries of the same show could not be entered in the same category under the same title – as a **Series**.

Since we entered our application for **Series** consideration before Nickelodeon did, we felt that our entry was the only valid one.

The Academy then decided that it would be possible for there to be 2 entries of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW on the ballot in the same category (SPUMCO'S entry as a **Special** and Nickelodeon's entry as a **Series**).

Libby was asked to send a written request to the Academy, to change our entry from **Series** to **Special**, which she did on May 25. Please see the attached copy of the letter.

About one week before the ballots were sent out, Libby was informed by Gerry Woolery that Nickelodeon had pulled its entry out of competition and that our entry would be the only one on the ballot. We naively assumed that they were pulling out to avoid the embarrassment of competing against the actual people who created, produced and nurtured the **Series** to the point of it becoming a popular success. We assumed that they realized the irony of applying for an award for a **Series** from which they FIRED the creative team. No mention was made *before the nominations* that Nickelodeon would want to make an about face and have some of their names added to the entry that they tried to get disqualified.

The entry appeared on the ballot with THE REN & STIMPY SHOW as a **Series**.

Libby called Gerry to see if this entry was our entry or Nickelodeon's entry as it was unclear, seeing that we were told to apply as a **Special**. He told her that the Academy had decided to change *our* entry to a **Series**. I'm still not sure of the reason for this reversion, considering all the above trouble we had gone to just to remain eligible at all.

We received a letter from you that stated that there now was a deadline of July 2 for submission of any *additional* producers. The letter stated, that "on July 22, if your program is nominated, its title will be announced in the Press Release, but *the producers will not be listed until they are verified as eligible*". We were to receive and return a verification form by July 29. The eligible producers would then be announced on August 4. *We never received any such form.*

On July 22, the announcement of the nominees was released and we were flattered to see that Spumco's entry was one of the 5 Shows nominated in the category of OUTSTANDING ANIMATED PROGRAM (1 hour or less). The credits were listed just as they were on the Spumco entry. See list attached.

After the nomination was announced with the Academy's verified list, Gerry informed Libby on Monday, July 26th, that Nickelodeon may want to add "a couple" of Producers onto the nominee list and that "the Academy would run any changes by John". To my mind, this suggestion directly contradicted your own regulations that I quote in the above paragraph.

On August 2 we received a fax from Todd Binkley with the Final Credit List, which added 4 more "Producers" from Nickelodeon to the credits.

The Academy did not confer with Libby *or* me (as we were promised) about the credit changes. The fax just stated that "the change had been finalized".

Had we been informed of the names that Nickelodeon wished to add to the credits, I certainly would not have accepted them because they are neither true nor fair to the other people (particularly Jim Smith and Bob Camp) on the show that made much more significant contributions.

Certainly, Nickelodeon knew that we never would have approved such changes or it would have submitted these names months ago, before the deadlines, allowing time for both sides of the issue to provide evidence to the Academy according to the Academy's regulations (which we meticulously followed), pertaining to what qualifies a Producer on an Emmy entry. Had we known that we could submit other people to the Emmy entry, regardless of the Emmy's written regulations, we would ourselves have submitted other major contributors to the success of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW on the entry.

But, Nickelodeon apparently chose the more (in my opinion) deceptive route as outlined above, rather than openly, in the beginning, submitting a case for their additions to the ballot.

The following is a list of names that Nickelodeon wishes to add to the nomination. I do not feel that any of these names should qualify as Producer. As the Creator and Producer, Head Writer and Director of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW for the first and second seasons, I can tell you with absolute certainty that none of these people "Produced" THE REN & STIMPY SHOW, nor do they qualify as having made more significant contributions than many other key members of the production. I also submit that these people do not qualify under your own regulations ("Rules and Procedures" – Page 33-36) that constitute a Producer in the eyes of the Academy. I will explain in more detail below just what these people did or didn't do for THE REN & STIMPY SHOW.

First permit me to quote your own qualifications for what constitutes a Producer from "Rules & Procedures" – Page 33-36.

"Emmy(s) will be awarded only to qualified executive producers(s) and producer(s) notwithstanding that the production company may have accorded such credit to other persons as well. A person shall be deemed eligible if he or she

- **actually engages in the producing of a program;**
- **such person's activities must include**
- **initiating,**
- **coordinating,**
- **supervising and**
- **controlling (either under his/her own authority or subject to the authority of the production company)**
- **all aspects of the production process, including all**
- **creative,**
- **financial,**
- **technological and**
- **administrative activities, throughout**
- **all phases of production from**
- **inception through**
- **post-production; etc..."**

This broad and all encompassing description of what a Producer does perfectly describes my own and Libby Simon's role on the second season of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW.

None of the people below either singly or in combination completely fulfill the duties above on the second season of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW. Most of these duties were already done before Nickelodeon pulled the show away from us. Nickelodeon and their employee's jobs were only to follow through with the production and the production plan that was created at Spumco. None of these people can claim to have "initiated, or controlled, etc... *all* aspects of the production process throughout *all* aspects of production from *inception through* post production". Only Libby and I have done this.

MARY HARRINGTON – SUPERVISING PRODUCER

Notwithstanding that Mary Harrington was given a credit by Nickelodeon as "Supervising Producer – 'for Nickelodeon'", flatly, Mary Harrington had absolutely nothing to do with THE REN & STIMPY SHOW in either a creative sense or a Producer sense. Mary Harrington worked in New York at Nickelodeon. THE REN & STIMPY SHOW was produced in Los Angeles at Spumco. I personally had absolutely no contact or dealings with her during the entire production of the second season. She may have had some valuable function for Vanessa Coffey in New York relaying messages from Libby Simon concerning our Payment Schedule and Budget, but she in no way was a Producer of anything to do with THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW.

ROY ALLEN SMITH – SUPERVISING PRODUCER

Supervising Producer #2. Roy Smith, while he is a talented artist and a nice guy, did not Produce THE REN & STIMPY SHOW; nor did he provide any creative services. Nickelodeon hired Roy Smith to sit in our studio and watch what was going on and report to Vanessa Coffey and Mary Harrington in New York. He had no authority. Vanessa Coffey, the Executive Producer, made all creative decisions on behalf of Nickelodeon. After Smith helped Nickelodeon set up Games Productions to finish Spumco's production of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW, ironically, Roy was dismissed from the show. That's how important Nickelodeon felt Roy Smith's contribution to the production was.

JIM BALLANTINE – PRODUCER

No matter what credit Nickelodeon has decided to award Jim Ballantine after the fact (after they took the Show away from Spumco), his actual function on the production of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW was "Production Manager". That is what I hired him for. That's what he did. The whole Production-system was developed by the Producers, myself and Libby Simon and in the first season, by Chris Danzo. This Production-system was already in place when Ballantine arrived at Spumco. All the talent was hired by me, most of the production staff by Libby. Ballantine's job was to follow certain aspects of the Production through. He did not "Initiate" anything, he did not follow through post-production, and in fact, after the second season of THE REN AND STIMPY SHOW was taken over, neither Mr. Ballantine nor the production company, Games was even able to *complete* the season, period. Out of 13 –1/2 hour episodes started in production at Spumco (4 of which were completed start to finish by Spumco), only a total of 11 second season episodes actually aired. Nickelodeon abandoned two complete 1/2 hour episodes. None of these "producers" were able to complete the production.

FRANK SAPERSTEIN – CO-PRODUCER

According to your own rules, Co-Producers do not qualify for Emmy consideration. Frank Saperstein's *actual* job on the production was Post-Production Supervisor and Casting-Co-ordinator. He was very good at this. He scheduled all the post-production duties. He was not involved creatively, nor was he responsible for hiring any editors, mixers, music cutters or any other creative staff in post. This was my responsibility. Saperstein was not at all involved in Pre-Production, Production, Overseas Production, Financial supervision or any of the Producer's functions. When Saperstein left to work directly for Nickelodeon, he continued his function for a time as Post-Production Supervisor. Apparently, Vanessa Coffey didn't feel he was able to even accomplish *this* task to her satisfaction, for she fired him shortly after he left us to work for them. Why does Nickelodeon wish to add people's names (who they fired) to the list of Emmy nominees? It doesn't make any sense to me.

Out of all the Nickelodeon Executives and employees (or ex-employees) that are now on the list of nominees, I feel that only Vanessa Coffey has a legitimate claim to having made a large enough contribution to THE REN & STIMPY SHOW in order to qualify as a "producer" of any kind. That is why she was included on *our* entry.

What is truly astounding to me is that with all the trouble that Nickelodeon has gone to to get these people's names on the list, they've left out the *one* person who has a truly legitimate claim to be honored for his huge contribution to the success of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW, and that is **Bob Camp**, who supposedly is their key creative person on the show. He is the man Nickelodeon hired to supposedly take my place. His vision is supposed to be guiding the show now. Camp is one of the original key-creative team. He more than any of the added people on the list of nominees understands the show, its psychology, its characters and its wild sense of humor. If Camp's name was the addition Nickelodeon requested, you would hardly hear a peep from me. He, along with Spumco's **Jim Smith**, were my chief creative collaborators. As I said above, had I known that your Emmy rules could be bent, I would certainly have requested that Jim Smith be added as an Executive Producer and I would have fully expected Nickelodeon to stand up for *their* most important person.

In fact, on the first 4 episodes of THE REN & STIMPY SHOW, I actually awarded Smith and Camp Producer's Credits because I felt that they were the ones who were actually "producing" most of the **creative** material that made the show a great success. Their contributions to the show are *vastly* superior to the people's listed above. Yet, as soon as Nickelodeon took over the show, they eliminated these very important credits.

It seems that Nickelodeon doesn't feel Camp's contribution to be as valuable as Mary Harrington's, Frank Saperstein's, Roy Smith's or Jim Ballantine's. I'm quite sure that if you spoke to anybody (besides the people listed above) who works either at Spumco *or* at Games, they, like me would find this to be beyond incredible.

You may or may not be aware of the considerable controversy surrounding our removal from the show and I'm sorry that the controversy has now trickled over into the Emmy awards. This is very unfortunate and I'm sure that you would rather not get involved. However, I can't stand by and let something happen that I know is absolutely wrong.

I personally think that Nickelodeon's actions behind the scenes have been calculated and deceptive. I don't see how to read the above sequence of events any other way. They are trying to take credit for the success of a show that each of these individuals has no personal love for – at the expense of the real contributors.

I am asking you to return the Emmy nomination list to the one you announced on (Date), the one that qualified according to your rules. If you can do nothing at this point to correct what I feel to be a great injustice, I will totally understand. If it is too late to judge these "producers" according to the Emmys' qualifications, and by your deadline regulations, then I will have to accept this sad reality.

If these people walked away from this series with Emmy nominations or, heaven forbid, the Emmy itself, it would be such an outrageous insult to all the artists that were devoted to the show. Therefore, I will not contribute to Nickelodeon's hypocrisy, and would respectfully ask to withdraw *our* entry (and this is a Spumco entry, remember that Nickelodeon withdrew their entry) from the 1993 Emmys nomination and we will content ourselves with the honor that we were even considered for our beloved THE REN & STIMPY SHOW.

Sincerely yours,



John Kricfalusi,
Creator and Producer of "The Ren & Stimpy Show"

cc: J.A. Ted Baer, Esq., Cooper, Epstein & Hurewitz
Ari Emanuel, ICM
Gerry Woolery
Bob Camp, Games Productions
Libby Simon, Spumco, Inc.
Jim Smith, Spumco, Inc.
Vincent Waller, Spumco, Inc.
Richard Pursel, Spumco, Inc.
Bob Jaques, Carbunkle Cartoons